

A biweekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team

Topic Links

Home
Characterization News
Transportation News
Disposal News
Safety News
Working Smart
Announcements
Our Team

Tools

Acronym List
Archives
Links
WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#) or submit your e-mail address for updates.

By the Numbers

Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP week of 06/27/04 - 07/03/04:
18

Total shipments received at WIPP as of 06/23/04:
2,720

Total volume disposed at WIPP as of 06/23/04:
21,428 m³

WIPP welcomes French visitors

High-ranking members of the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique (CEA), France's equivalent of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, toured WIPP on Monday, hosted by Sandia National Laboratories.

Visitors included CEA Chairman Alain Bugat, French Embassy Nuclear Counselor Regis Babinet, and Executive Deputy Director Didier Kechemair. Though WIPP has hosted members of the French CEA in the past, this was the first visit for Bugat.

The group's stop at WIPP was one of several on a national tour focusing on the United States' new energy and non-proliferation technologies, nuclear waste clean-up issues and waste management.

The national tour began in Washington, D.C., where the French CEA members met with New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici. They continued to WIPP and will end their stay in the states after visits to Sandia's primary location in Albuquerque and to Los Alamos National Laboratory. "Approximately 80 percent of France's energy is supplied by nuclear power," notes CBFO Chief Scientist Roger Nelson. "They handle their nuclear by-products through an effective storage and reprocessing system, but a geological nuclear waste repository program to assist with these challenges is also in the works."

"WIPP is, of course, the only operational geological repository in the world," says Regis Babinet. "Chairman Bugat was eager to view the WIPP underground and operations as a way to further our own nuclear management programs."

SNL/CPG hosted the group's visit to WIPP. Sandia-Albuquerque Vice President Les Shepard, SNL/CPG Manager Paul Shoemaker, WIPP icon Wendell Weart and other SNL/CPG staff members were joined by CBFO's Nelson for the WIPP tour. "It is an honor to escort our esteemed visitors as they take their first look at WIPP," says Shoemaker. "We are always glad to promote WIPP's position as the foremost, and first licensed, geologic repository in the world."



The tour group began their day in Carlsbad at the SNL/CPG offices. Standing in back: Wendell Weart, Frank Hansen-SNL, Les Shepard and Paul Shoemaker. Middle: Tom Sanders-SNL, Chairman Bugat, Regis Babinet and Didier Kechemair. Front: Nathalie Wall-SNL and Roger Nelson.



Right on schedule

The CTAC Audit and Assessment team conducts generator site certification and recertification audits on behalf of CBFO. Additionally, the group conducts internal assessments of WIPP operations. These functions keep staff members busy and resource scheduling is a top priority. *TRU TeamWorks* takes a look at the group's near-term schedule.

Topic Links

Home
Characterization News
Transportation News
Disposal News
Safety News
Working Smart
Announcements
Our Team

Tools

Acronym List
Archives
Links
WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#) or submit your e-mail address for updates.

The Audit and Assessment team recently completed an onsite assessment at Hanford. "This was a recertification audit of Hanford's characterization and transportation programs," says Wayne Ledford, of the CTAC Audits and Assessments group.



In July, the CTAC team will focus on CAST Transportation and TRI-State Motor Transportation, WIPP's TRU waste carriers. Both vendors are assessed annually. "We ensure that they are meeting regulatory requirements and contract commitments," says Ledford. In August, another generator site recertification audit is scheduled. This one at the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project at INEEL. It too, will cover the project's characterization and transportation programs.

In September, CTAC staff members will travel to LANL, then it's off to NTS and SRS in October. And the list goes on. "Generator site certifications and recertifications definitely keep us busy," notes Ledford. "But the onsite assessments are only part of the job." Preparation for an onsite audit begins at least thirty days before. After the assessment, CTAC personnel generate reports of their findings. Interim, then final reports are issued for generator site certifications and recertifications. "The final reports can get rather lengthy," says Ledford, "but we work to ensure our regulators have everything they need to make their determination." The group also tracks outstanding corrective action requests (CARs) and ensures corrective actions are complete before the CARs are closed.

Several internal assessments are also scheduled from July to September. The schedule for these assessments, as well as the external audits is determined by CBFO. The assessment schedule ensures that all areas of WIPP operations are reviewed in accordance with federal regulations.

"The Audit and Assessment team stays busy on the road and in the office," comments Ledford. "But we always keep our focus on safety and compliance at WIPP."

Topic Links

- Home
- Characterization News
- Transportation News
- Disposal News
- Safety News
- Working Smart
- Announcements
- Our Team

Tools

- Acronym List
- Archives
- Links
- WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#) or submit your e-mail address for updates.

Transportation milestone: The 100th shipment to depart Hanford arrived at WIPP at 11:50 a.m. on June 18!

Tribal partners

WIPP drivers pass through a number of states while transporting TRU waste to WIPP. Within those states, drivers also pass through tribal territories. Each of these Native American tribes is recognized by the U.S. government as a sovereign nation with its own government and tribal laws. In accordance with the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act, DOE forged agreements with the individual tribes impacted by WIPP shipments and provides them funding for program coordination, training and education initiatives to safely respond in the unlikely event of an incident involving a WIPP shipment.

In New Mexico alone, WIPP trucks cross into the territories of five separate nations: the Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Laguna, Pueblo of Nambé, Pueblo of Pojoaque, and the Pueblo of San Ildefonso. Each nation has a rich, centuries-old history.



There are many tribal nations in New Mexico. This map shows those impacted by WIPP shipments.

Pueblo of Acoma

The Acoma Pueblo is famous for its “Sky City,” strategically built 365 feet above the surrounding area to protect it from invasion. The tribe has approximately 6,000 members and incorporates 377,000 acres of land along I-40 in western New Mexico.

Pueblo of Laguna

The Laguna Pueblo was the most recently established of the pueblos. The 500,000-acre pueblo consists of six separate villages and accommodates nearly 4,000 tribal members. Four dialects are spoken at Laguna Pueblo.

Pueblo of Nambé

The Pueblo of Nambé was established circa 1300 A.D. Northeast of Santa Fe, the pueblo offers sweeping vistas of the Sangre De Cristo Mountains. Today, approximately 1,700 people live on the pueblo. The Nambé people are especially well known for their beautiful hand-crafted silver and pottery.

Pueblo of Pojoaque

The Pojoaque Pueblo boasts 2,700 residents and is located about 15 miles north of Santa Fe. In 1997, a full-scale WIPP transportation exercise was conducted on the pueblo with the participation of tribal emergency response personnel.

Pueblo of San Ildefonso

The smallest of the WIPP tribal partners, San Ildefonso Pueblo numbers 500 residents. The Tewa-speaking tribe was nearly devastated by smallpox outbreak in the early 1900s. The pueblo is northwest of Santa Fe.

Learn more about WIPP’s other tribal partners in the July 1 edition of *TRU TeamWorks*.

A countdown to cleanup

Momentum is building at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (RFETS) in Golden, Colorado, as DOE moves toward final cleanup and closure of the nuclear weapons site. Prominently displayed on the site's home page is a "Countdown to Closure" ticker, counting down the days, hours, minutes and even seconds until December 15, 2006.

"We are ahead of schedule and under budget," said Bill Badger, Kaiser-Hill Public Affairs. "We are demolishing nearly four structures and buildings a week and have more than 180 sanitary and radioactive waste shipments leave a week."

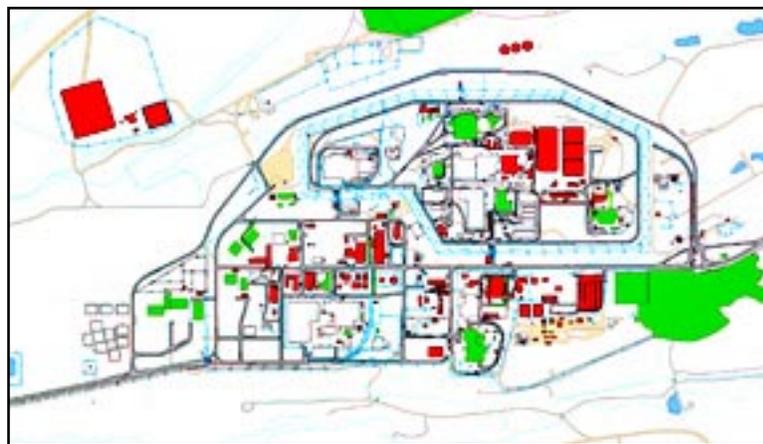
With the cleanup deadline just 28 months away, RFETS continues to be the primary shipper of TRU waste to WIPP. Rocky Flats' waste now accounts for approximately 53 percent of the total volume of waste disposed at WIPP.

Kaiser-Hill, the prime cleanup contractor at Rocky Flats, plans to send non-TRU and low-level radioactive waste inventories to other facilities for disposition. In February 2004, the last of Rocky Flats' weapons-useable Pu was removed, marking an end to the project's 50-year nuclear mission.

Throughout the Cold War, Rocky Flats' workers fashioned uranium and plutonium components for nuclear weapons – key contributors to a strong national defense. The plant stopped making weapon components in 1989, and decommissioning plans followed. Cleanup of the 6,000+ acre site northwest of Denver, Colorado, is now more than 80 percent complete.

Kaiser-Hill began the estimated \$4 billion project pledging to maintain the facility in safe, operable condition until deactivated. Ultimately, 21 tons of special nuclear material will be packaged and shipped, more than 800 structures will be demolished, 1,450 contaminated gloveboxes stripped out and millions of gallons of contaminated wastewater and sludges will be removed before the site is transformed into a national wildlife refuge.

Rocky Flats will maintain the TRU shipment pace through 2005. "By spring of 2005 we will have completed our TRU waste shipping operations to WIPP," said Badger.



Demolished structures at RFETS
Structures to be demolished in fiscal year 2004

To date, 440 out of 805 structures have been demolished.

Topic Links

- Home
- Characterization News
- Transportation News
- Disposal News
- Safety News
- Working Smart
- Announcements
- Our Team

Tools

- Acronym List
- Archives
- Links
- WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#) or submit your e-mail address for updates.

Topic Links

Home
 Characterization News
 Transportation News
 Disposal News
 Safety News
 Working Smart
 Announcements
 Our Team

Tools

Acronym List
 Archives
 Links
 WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#)
 or submit your e-mail
 address for updates.



Safety you can hear ... and sing along with!

I hear a Grammy! It's too bad that the music industry doesn't have an award for Top Safety Song, because WIPP would certainly have a nominee. Since February 2004, WTS Industrial Safety has provided a unique way to learn more about safety topics. In a monthly audio gram, WIPP-related safety topics are addressed in an audio message that concludes with a song about the month's designated safety focus.

The Safety audio gram is the brainchild of Curtis Potter and John Ingram, who have combined their work in the Safety, Security, and Technical Assistance Department with their love of music.

"There was always music in my house growing up," reflects Ingram. "My brother and sister and I always watched Band Stand, Soul Train and then went to church. Music is still a big part of my house today."

Potter and Ingram came up with the idea when trying to devise a different way to spread the safety message around the site. "If we sang, people would listen and perhaps the message would stay with them all day," adds Ingram. "People relate to music and respond to it differently. We get a whole lot of feedback. They like those (audiograms)."

WTS Manager of Industrial Safety and Hygiene Tom Ferguson approves of the toe-tapping safety message. "Anything that raises our awareness of safety issues is beneficial. The audio gram educates people about safety in a fun and creative way."

This month's safety focus is on fall protection when working at heights. "Better use your fall protection, today," sings Alvy Williams (WTS Operations Department) to the tune of "Baby Elephant Walk." The song was originally an instrumental performed by Henry Mancini for the movie *Hatari*. Employees can find the audio gram on the Industrial Safety Intranet page and it is also available by calling the Dialing for Safety line at Be4Safe (234-7233).

And what about winning that Grammy? Well, the real prize is preventing an injury or saving a life, but when it comes to recognition, it's just an honor to be nominated.



Click here to hear the June 2004 audio gram. Please note the file size is 1.8 MB.

Ask the right people how to improve

If you want to improve performance, then you need to ask the right people. That applies to industries across the board, and it also applies to WIPP. Accordingly, employees in the Operations Department recently filled out surveys to identify ways to enhance work performance. The survey was conducted in late May.

Since completing the survey, Operations' management has been anxiously awaiting the results. So far, the process has been very positive. "Conduct of operations, like safety, is a culture," explains Steve Youngerman, deputy operations manager. "To excel, one must first believe in its principles and then live them everyday."

This thought was evident in the survey's high participation rate. Survey coordinator, Rebecca Walker, of the WTS Information Management Department, says the employee involvement was impressive. "Out of 305 Operations Department employees, we received survey forms from 229. That translates into a 75 percent participation rate, which is extremely high for any survey."

The anonymous and voluntary surveys gave employees – the people who know best – the chance to rate work elements in eight categories:

- 1) Verbal communication
- 2) Written communication
- 3) Equipment condition
- 4) Environmental conditions
- 5) Work schedule
- 6) Work practices
- 7) Work planning
- 8) Supervisory methods
- 9) Training
- 10) Change management
- 11) Resource management
- 12) Managerial methods

Participants responded to work elements on a five-point scale, indicating whether they strongly agreed, strongly disagreed or fell somewhere in between. For example, in category 7, Work planning, one of the elements gave two options "Insufficient time allotted for tasks" and "Sufficient time allotted for tasks." Participants then circled one of the five circles between the options that represented their point of view.

Surveys have been done in the past, as well. They can be a useful tool for self-identifying issues and continual improvement. The survey's aim is not only to make the organization more effective, but also to make it a better place to work. *TRU TeamWorks* will keep you posted.

“Conduct of operations, like safety, is a culture.”

*-- Steve Youngerman,
WTS Deputy
Operations Manager*

Topic Links

Home
 Characterization News
 Transportation News
 Disposal News
 Safety News
 Working Smart
 Announcements
 Our Team

Tools

Acronym List
 Archives
 Links
 WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#) or submit your e-mail address for updates.

Topic Links

Home
Characterization News
Transportation News
Disposal News
Safety News
Working Smart
Announcements
Our Team

Tools

Acronym List
Archives
Links
WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#)
or submit your e-mail
address for updates.

NCI selected for six contracts worth \$7M in Intelligence, Defense, and Homeland Security arenas

NCI Information Systems, Inc. (NCI), announced that the company has been selected on six contracts in the Intelligence, Defense, and Homeland Security arenas. The contracts have an expected value in excess of \$7 million over the next twelve years with the majority of the work effort performed over the next two to five years.

“While most of these contracts are not immediately large in size, they provide significant opportunities in some new areas for NCI and demonstrate continued expansion in current key areas,” said Charles Narang, chairman and chief executive officer for NCI.

NCI joined with Chenega Technology Services Corporation (CTSC) for two of the efforts and will perform work under existing CTSC contracts as a subcontractor. NCI was selected for the efforts due to unique expertise, the company’s proven reputation for high quality services, and NCI’s depth of cleared personnel.



Scientists demonstrate quantum teleportation with atoms

Researchers at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, in collaboration with a scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, announced the first demonstration of the teleportation of a quantum state from one trapped atom to another located eight microns — slightly less than one-thousandth of an inch — away. This is the first time quantum teleportation has been achieved with actual particles (as opposed to beams of light), and the first time it has been demonstrated in an entirely deliberate and controllable manner.

According to quantum information physicist Daniel F. James, the Los Alamos investigator on the project, “The significance of these results is that they represent an important step toward making quantum information processing a reality. Such a technology would exploit the fundamental properties of quantum mechanical systems — the very properties that make them different from the classical physics phenomena encountered in everyday life — in order to compute or communicate far more efficiently than is currently possible even with the most advanced super-computers.”

The key to quantum state teleportation is a peculiar quantum-mechanical link that can be created between two or more particles called entanglement. First studied theoretically by Albert Einstein, together with Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen, in 1935, entanglement is believed to form the critical ingredient of the futuristic quantum computer, a revolutionary new technology currently under intense development worldwide.

Our Team

Topic Links

- Home
- Characterization News
- Transportation News
- Disposal News
- Safety News
- Working Smart
- Announcements
- Our Team

Tools

- Acronym List
- Archives
- Links
- WIPP Home Page

Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#) or submit your e-mail address for updates.



Birthdays

- Gary Morrison (WTS)** - June 22
- Lucy Rodriguez (L&M)** - June 24
- Annabelle Axinn(CTAC)** - June 26
- Wayne Ledford (WRES)** - June 27
- Sheila Pearcy (L&M)** - July 4



Energy awareness

Employees are asked to help in saving energy, particularly in the Skeen-Whitlock Building and other office spaces. Please remember to turn off lights (including fixtures built into cubicle dividers), CPUs, printers, monitors, and computer system speakers. These devices consume significant amounts of power even in the “power saver” mode. Turning this equipment off, particularly over weekends, will save power and reduce cooling costs.